**ELA COMPETENCIES**

**6/29/11**

**INVESTIGATE**

*Ask a question, formulate a thesis, design a strategy to answer the question, and gather the information necessary to complete the inquiry.*

* + Emerging competency is revealed when students:
  + In reading texts:
    - Demonstrate curiosity about language, literature, and other media
    - Read and listen for a self-conscious personal purpose or real-world demand, adjusting as necessary to meet that purpose
    - Read purposefully, probing beneath the surface for information and ideas within a text
    - Use reference tools, an understanding of word parts and word origins, and context clues to determine or clarify the meaning of unfamiliar words
    - “Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it” (R 1)
  + In research projects:
    - “Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation”(W 7)
    - “Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism” (W 8)
    - Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. (W 9)
    - Make and defend choices about which sources to consult, which to emphasize, and which to ignore, in the course of a research project
    - Organize the information collect, to facilitate perceiving patterns and, therefore, drawing conclusions
    - Develop firm conclusions only after consulting an appropriate range and number of sources
    - Identify the basic information needed to understand an issue of interest or importance, then seek information to better understand it
    - Draft, test, and refine a thesis over the course of a research project
    - Locate valid, useful, and up-to-date references to support inquiry

**DEVELOP MODELS, INTERPRETATIONS & EXPLANATIONS**

*Analyze and reflect upon texts of all kinds, in order to develop helpful ways of understanding the world we live in and the people in it.*

* + Emerging competency is revealed when students:
    - Infer the main idea(s) of a text and consider how those ideas fit with their prior experience and current views
    - Enhance an understanding of the text by connecting it to personal experience, world events, or other texts
    - Identify and detail the relationships between characters, settings, and/or themes in a text, highlighting how changes in one of those elements are likely to influence the others
    - Use text and their experience in the world to make increasing sense of human motivation, action, and relationships
    - Draw ever-richer conclusions by integrating the understanding gained from multiple texts, as well as by connecting the texts with personal experience.
    - “Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.” (R 7)
    - Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. (SL 2)
    - Identify alternative interpretations of a text, making and defending decisions on which is best
    - Identify the usefulness and limitations of various literary theories in analyzing literature
    - Integrate new information and ideas into existing mental frameworks, making adjustments to understanding, as required

**CONSTRUCT SOUND ARGUMENTS**

*Develop a viable, logical argument and defend it with sufficient, powerful evidence from texts and other media.*

* + Emerging competency is revealed when students:
    - Distinguish what the text says literally from what it implies
    - Distinguish what the text has to say from what their personal reactions to the text
    - State or imply that they understand that some arguments are better than others when it comes to literary analysis and evaluation, even if there is no final answer to any interpretive question
    - Habitually refer accurately to the text for evidence of their claims about what the text means.
    - Locate valid, useful, and up-to-date references to support research and inform the development of conclusions about matters of literacy
    - “Cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text” (R 1)

**QUESTION and CRITIQUE CLAIMS**

*Question and critique the work of writers and speakers (including classmates), identifying possible flaws or errors in their logic, the quality and sufficiency of their evidence, and their objectivity in presenting their ideas.*

* + Emerging competency is revealed when students:
    - Respectfully challenge interpretations of literature, providing a logical counter-argument based in solid evidence
    - Critique research presented by others, analyzing whether adequate textual evidence supports proposed explanations
    - Identify evidence or schools of interpretation that could be used to challenge others’ conclusions, evaluating whether those conclusions are valid
    - “Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence. “(R 8)
    - “Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.” (SL 3)
    - Recognize flaws in written or spoken claims, such as overgeneralizations from limited information, a failure to consider conflicting information or competing theories, and bias on the part of the writer/speaker
    - Offer and defend alternative interpretations
    - Identify and critique the theories, concepts, and assumptions that silently underlie the interpretations that authors and critics of texts present
    - Compare various interpretations of a text, giving clear and accurate reasons, based on evidence and its interpretation, for believing that one is more powerful than the other
    - Evaluate a written or spoken source for its validity, reliability, authority, completeness, and usefulness credibility
    - Apply principles used to evaluate non-fiction texts in a classroom setting to the independent evaluation of modern sources of information, including websites, advertisements, newscasts, and political announcements
    - Critically evaluate news accounts presented in the popular media, asking questions about the evidence provided, the logic used in framing the argument and the influence of unspoken perspectives and biases
    - Evaluate explanations offered by others, by examining and comparing evidence, pointing out statements that go beyond evidence, and suggesting alternative explanations.
    - Critique the writings of others, making explicit efforts to detect bias, the distortion of the facts, and propaganda by omission, suppression, or invention of “facts”

**INNOVATE AND ADAPT**

*Develop novel ideas and approaches to interpreting texts in all media and in creating texts in all media.*

* Emerging competency is revealed when students:
* See, interpret, and draw connections between texts, and between texts and personal experience, in a new way
* Find a more efficient or effective way to read or write
* Take risks in suggesting new explanations or developing new theories
  + - Use figurative and other creative modes of language to draw connections and make ideas come alive for a reader or listener
    - Apply inferences and predictions gained from the sources to ask and answer new questions
    - Revise ideas after a critical review of new information or alternative interpretations
    - Respond appropriately to questions and concerns raised by others, adjusting conclusions as required

**WORK STRATEGICALLY**

*Make and act on deliberate choices about what to do, when and how to do it, and how best to negotiate challenges along the way.*

* Emerging competency is revealed when students:
* Develop a research “plan of action” that is likely to yield the information required to answer a worthy question
* Predict likely challenges or errors in reading and writing, and make adjustments to avoid or overcome them
* Consider and explain various possible paths to achieving a goal, defending the choice of which path to pursue
* Identify and prioritize questions to answer, steps to take, resources to consult
* Rethink approaches based on new information gained
* Use time and resources effectively
* Create and use opportunities to build upon personal strengths and minimize weaknesses in order to achieve goals
* Develop, implement, and adjust processes and procedures that enhance effectiveness
* Develop and enhance relationships that foster productiveness
* Identify new learning that is required

**COMMUNICATE**

*Communicate information and ideas clearly and effectively, adjusting to address different audiences and purposes.*

* + Emerging competency is revealed when students:
    - Use apt language to communicate information and ideas in particular contexts (purpose/audience/setting)
    - Choose words, information, structures, formats, tools, and media deliberately to communicate ideas effectively in context.
    - Consistently use the conventions to achieve clarity and aid in communicating meaning – but *break* them (with obvious intent) when it is highly appropriate to context
    - Make intentional and effective choices about when to use formal English and when to use a more informal variant
    - Write with clarity, eloquence and grace; develop a voice
    - Employ whichever media are most appropriate for the purpose, audience, and setting
    - Choose structures for communication based on the purpose of that communication: make form follow function (e.g. a formal research paper to share historical findings, an editorial to share and defend an opinion on a key issue, an illustrated oral presentation to persuade an audience to take action on an issue)
    - Adjust vocabulary, emphasis, and level of detail to address the knowledge-level, interests, and openness of various audiences
    - “Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience” (SL 4)
    - “Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations” (SL 5)
    - “Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate” (SL 6)

**CONTRIBUTE**

*Work effectively as an individual, a member of a team, and a member of society to build communities that support a shared commitment to excellence in inquiry, analysis, interpretation, and communication; and to build a better society.*

* + Emerging competency is revealed when students:
    - Balance independence and teamwork
    - Make sound decisions about when to hold their ground and when to compromise for the consensus of the group
    - Work effectively with others to carry out research projects, solve problems, and present results effectively
    - “Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively” (SL 1)
    - In discussions, “build on others’ meritorious ideas while expressing their own clearly and persuasively.”
    - Engage in collaborative discussions designed to build and extend an understanding of language or literature
    - Provide insightful feedback to peers
    - Divide work among team members based on an understanding of the task at hand, as well as an appreciation of the skills, interests, and needs of each team member
    - Identify their own interests, strengths, and weaknesses and balance them when choosing roles in group work
    - Facilitate the work of team members
    - Build a shared sense of responsibility and initiative
    - Assert their own ideas and challenge the ideas of others, while demonstrating respect for the ideas and personalities of others
    - Inspire others to work more intelligently, efficiently, and purposefully
    - Develop and articulate an ability to discern when disagreement about an issue is appropriate (perhaps reflecting defensible differences of opinion) and when it signals a lack of understanding (perhaps through a significant misreading of the text or of the people you are working with).
    - Actively display respect for classmates by encouraging their contributions and then attending to their diverse viewpoints
    - Act in a manner consistent with their personal ethics and a commitment to excellence
    - Take appropriate risks, and accept responsibility for errors
    - Speak their minds and respectfully take action despite the resistance of others
    - Recognize that differences such as race, gender, class, and ethnicity can affect the way that people interpret literature
    - Make critical but empathetic decision about when to accept the differing view of another and when to challenge it

**SELF-ASSESS and SELF-ADJUST**

*Pro-actively seek feedback, assess progress and performance all along the way, and make timely and appropriate adjustments, based on gaps between goals and result, when reading, writing, speaking and listening.*

* + Emerging competency is revealed when students:
    - Accurately assess the quality of the work they produce against classroom and professional standards
    - Take the initiative to get feedback, seek advice, or obtain different points of view while reading or writing are in progress
    - Regularly scrutinize the information they are collecting and the conclusions they are reaching, to make sure they are not oversimplifying, ignoring evidence that contradicts their developing understanding, or falling prey to researcher or interpreter bias
    - Read increasingly on their own, as they grasp what literacy demands
    - Revise their work to address self-identified weaknesses
    - Recognize a lack of knowledge, skill or understanding on their own and take the initiative to rectify the situation.
    - Stop blaming the texts, their peers, or their teacher for problems that they could have diagnosed and addressed.
    - Identify and confront culturally grounded assumptions (based in class, location, education, religion, race, or other elements of culture) that influence their understanding of literature
    - Take responsibility for their own interpretations of the texts, and their understanding of connections between the these texts and the real world, by explaining and defending their ideas publicly in a variety of personal and professional contexts
    - draw upon previous learning and life experience to become increasingly independent in new learning